

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021

HR 1043

4
5 By: Representative Ennett

6
7 **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

8 TO RECOGNIZE SCIPIO AFRICANUS JONES AND HIS ROLE IN
9 DEFENDING MEN ACCUSED IN THE ELAINE MASSACRE OF 1919.

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12 **Subtitle**

13 TO RECOGNIZE SCIPIO AFRICANUS JONES AND
14 HIS ROLE IN DEFENDING MEN ACCUSED IN THE
15 ELAINE MASSACRE OF 1919.

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18 WHEREAS, Scipio Africanus Jones was a prominent Little Rock attorney
19 and a leading Black citizen at the end of the nineteenth century and during
20 the first decades of the twentieth century; and

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22 WHEREAS, Mr. Jones was born the child of a slave, Jemmima Jones, in
23 1863, in Tulip, Arkansas, and attended schools for Black children in the area
24 before moving to Little Rock and attending Walden Seminary, now Philander
25 Smith College, where he completed the four-year college preparatory course in
26 just three (3) years before receiving his bachelor's degree from Bethel
27 Institute, now Shorter College, in 1885; and

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29 WHEREAS, after college, Mr. Jones taught public school while studying
30 law on his own time, and in 1889 he passed the bar examination and was
31 admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Arkansas in 1900 and to the
32 United States Supreme Court in 1905; and

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34 WHEREAS, Mr. Jones practiced law in Little Rock for the rest of his
35 life and frequently represented indigent citizens and worked to correct abuse
36 and injustice in Arkansas's penal system, and he served as judge in both



1 temporary and special capacities throughout his career; and

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3 WHEREAS, the most significant case with which Mr. Jones was involved
4 was the defense of twelve (12) Black men who were arrested following the
5 Elaine Massacre of 1919 and sentenced to death later that year for murder in
6 what the prosecution called a Black uprising; and

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8 WHEREAS, Mr. Jones was hired by the Black citizens of Little Rock to
9 work with the firm of George W. Murphy, an attorney hired by the National
10 Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to secure the release of
11 the men, who were convicted in trials marked by weak evidence, a lack of
12 cross-examination of the witnesses, and short deliberations by the juries;
13 and

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15 WHEREAS, Mr. Jones and the legal team were successful in securing the
16 release of all twelve (12) men by January 1925, and Mr. Jones is quoted as
17 saying the case was "the greatest case against peonage and mob law ever
18 fought in the land",

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20 NOW THEREFORE,

21 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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24 THAT the House of Representatives recognize Scipio Africanus Jones for
25 his contributions to the State of Arkansas.